



Michigan National Organization for Women

1140 Abbot Rd. #860
East Lansing, Michigan 48826
(517) 485-9687
www.michnow.org

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Honorable Rick Jones, Chair
Senate Judiciary Committee
915 Farnum Building
Lansing, Michigan

Dear Senators Jones, Schuitmaker, Rocca, and Bieda:

The Michigan National Organization for Women is **opposed to HB 5711**. The bill is an assault on the constitutional right of women in the state of Michigan to access safe and legal abortions. HB 5711 is the most extreme and radical anti-abortion clinic bill considered by this legislature in recent memory.

Although the sponsor of this bill claims that it is meant to protect women, the real purpose and intent of HB 5711 is to close clinics and prevent doctors from providing abortions. It does this through unnecessary and overbroad regulation. The bill:

- Requires the remains of an abortion or miscarriage at 10 weeks or more to be buried or cremated like a dead body;
- Prohibits physicians from prescribing medical (Rx) abortions over webcam when the evidence indicates that the protocols adopted for this method of abortion are quite safe and less expensive, especially for rural women;
- Requires abortion doctors to carry greater liability insurance than other physicians when the evidence indicates that abortion is one of the safest medical procedures that women experience;
- Requires doctors' offices performing more than 5 outpatient abortions a month to be licensed as freestanding surgical centers, an entirely unnecessary requirement that will drive up costs and reduce the number of doctors performing abortions;
- Requires medical personnel to counsel women against being coerced to have an abortion.

Abortions are safer than vasectomies and other invasive surgical procedures routinely done in doctors' offices, yet the proponents of this bill think that legislators should establish an elaborate regulatory scheme for abortion providers. If there are a few doctors who have engaged in malpractice, they should be thoroughly prosecuted. The current licensing and disciplinary laws and regulations are adequate to address these problems.

One of three Michigan women will have an abortion in her lifetime. Even medically required abortions to protect a woman's health are swept up in this giant overreach of a bill. It will drive some women to use unsafe and illegal alternatives because locally accessible and safe abortion will be unavailable if this bill becomes law. As a result, some women will die or suffer disabilities for life,

NOW's purpose is to take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men.

lose their fertility, or have other adverse consequences. These are your constituents that you are sentencing to these outcomes if you report out this bill.

It is clear that the purpose of the bill is to close abortion clinics and to discourage doctors from performing abortions. It is clear that another purpose of the bill is to increase the cost of abortions and to make them inaccessible or impossible to obtain in Michigan. If clinics close and doctors' offices can no longer offer abortion services because your regulatory scheme has made abortion cost-prohibitive or impossible, women will be forced to travel out of state to get an abortion, causing delays and more expense if not medical complications and greater risk to women's lives. Again, these are your constituents we are talking about, real women with a problem pregnancy who don't agree with the anti-abortion extremists that a fetus is more important than a woman's life or health.

Michigan NOW advises that you reject HB 5711 and turn to positive methods to prevent unintended pregnancies and medically problematic pregnancies that result in abortions. You have a dozen or so bills that are designed to effectively address the issue of abortion prevention, but so far the Senate has refused to consider those bills.

And finally, if this bill becomes law, you will be choosing to take on a major losing legal battle, expending taxpayer resources to carry out what is basically a religious crusade with which many of your constituents disagree. Whereas a personal viewpoint that abortion is immoral or a sin is certainly any individual's prerogative, we do not think that you should use your office to impose that religious belief on all Michiganders by passing a bill that regulates abortion clinics and providers out of existence.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Mary Pollock
Legislative Vice President